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THE WIDOW'S DOG.

BY MISS MITFORD.

ONE of the most beautiful spots in the north of Hampshire—a part of the country which, from its winding green lanes, with the trees meeting over head like a garland, its winding roads between coppices, with wide turf margins on either side, as if left on purpose for the picturesque and frequent gipsy camp, its abundance of hedgerow timber, and its extensive tracts of woodland, seems as if the fields were just dug out of the forest, as might have happened in the days of William Rufus—one of the loveliest scenes in this lovely county is the Great Pond at Ashley End.

Ashley End is itself a romantic and beautiful village, straggling down a steep hill to a close and narrow running stream, which crosses the road in the bottom, crossed in its turn by a picturesque wooden bridge, and then winding with equal abruptness up the opposite acclivity, so that the scattered cottages, separated from each other by long strips of garden ground, the little country inn, and two or three old-fashioned tenements of somewhat higher pretensions, surrounded by their own moss-grown orchards, seemed to be completely shut out from this bustling world, buried in the sloping meadows so deeply green, and the hanging woods so rich in their various tinting, along which the slender wreaths of smoke from the old clustered chimneys went smiling peacefully in the pleasant autumn air. So profound was the tranquillity, that the slender streamlet which gushed along the valley, following its natural windings, and glittering in the noonday sun like a thread of silver, seemed to the unfrequent visitors of that remote hamlet the only trace of life and motion in the picture.

The source of this pretty brook was undoubtedly the Great Pond, although there was no other road to it than by climbing the steep hill beyond the village, and then turning suddenly to the right, and descending by a deep cart-track, which led between wild banks covered with heath and feathery broom, garlanded with bramble and briar roses, and gay with the purple heath-flower and the delicate harebell, * to a

* One of the pleasantest moments that I have ever known, was that of the introduction of an accomplished young American to the common harebell, upon the very spot which I have attempted to describe. He had never seen that English wild-flower, consecrated by the poetry of our common language, was struck even more than I expected by its delicate beauty, placed it in his button-hole, and repeated with enthusiasm the charming lines

Scott, from the Lady of the Lake:—
"For me,"—she stooped, and, looking round,
Plucked a blue harebell from the ground,
"For me, whose memory scarce conveys
An image of more splendid days,
This little flower that loves the lea,
May well my simple emblem be;
It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as rose
That in the King's own garden grows,
And when I place it in my hair,
Allan, a bard is bound to swear
He ne'er saw coronet so fair."

all greater was the delight with which another American, also a young gentleman of high talent and acquirement, recognised the blossom of a thousand associations—the flower sacred to Milton and Shakespeare—the English primrose. He bent his knee to the ground in gathering a bunch, with a reverential emotion which I shall not easily forget, as if the flower were to him an embodiment of the great poets by whom it has been consecrated to fame; and he also had the good taste not to be pained of his own enthusiasm. I promise myself the honour of happiness of exporting this next spring to my friend Miss Lewick (to whose family one of my visitors belongs) roots and all of these wild flowers, of the common violet, the cowslip, the fly, another of our indigenous plants which our Transatlantic brethren want, and with which Mr Theodore Sedgwick was especially delighted. It will be a real distinction to be the productress of these plants into that Berkshire village of New Island, where Miss Sedgwick, surrounded by relatives worthy in talent and in character, passes her summers.

scene even more beautiful and more solitary than the hamlet itself.

It was a small clear lake almost embosomed in trees, across which an embankment, formed for the purpose of a decoy for the wildfowl with which it abounded, led into a wood which covered the opposite hill; an old forest-like wood, where the noble oaks, whose boughs almost dipped into the water, were surrounded by their sylvan accompaniments of birch and holly and hawthorn, where the tall trees met over the straggling paths, and waved across the grassy dells and turf brakes with which it was interspersed. One low-browed cottage stood in a little meadow—it might almost be called a little orchard—just at the bottom of the winding road that led to the Great Pond: the cottage of the Widow King.

Independently of its beautiful situation, there was much that was at once picturesque and comfortable about the cottage itself, with its irregularity of outline, its gable ends and jutting out chimneys, its thatched roof and penthouse windows. A little yard, with a small building which just held an old donkey chaise and an old donkey, a still older cow, and a few pens for geese and chickens, lay on one side of the house; in front a flower court, surrounded by a mossy paling, a larger plot for vegetables behind; and, stretching down to the Great Pond on the side opposite the yard, was the greenest of all possible meadows, which, as I have before said, a noble walnut and mulberry tree, and a few aged pears and apples, clustered near the dwelling, almost converted into that pleasantest appanage of country life, an orchard.

In spite, however, of the exceeding neatness of the flower court, and the little garden filled with choice beds of strawberries and lavender, and old-fashioned flowers, stocks, carnations, roses, pinks, and in spite of the cottage itself being not only almost covered with climbing shrubs, woodbine, jessamine, clematis, and musk-roses, and in one southern nook a magnificent tree-like fuschia, but the old chimney actually garlanded with delicate creepers, the maurandia, and the lotus spermus, whose pink and purple bells, peeping out from between their elegant foliage, and mingling with the bolder blossoms and darker leaves of the passion-flower, give such a wreathy and airy grace to the humblest building; in spite of this luxuriance of natural beauty, and of the evident care bestowed upon the cultivation of the beds, and the training of the climbing plants, we yet felt, we hardly could tell why, but yet we instinctively felt, that the moss-grown thatch, the mouldering paling, the hoary apple-trees, in a word, the evidences of decay visible around the place, were but types of the fading fortunes of the inmates.

And such was really the case. The Widow King had known better days. Her husband had been the

* I know nothing so pretty as the manner in which creeping plants interweave themselves one with another. We have at this moment a wall quite covered with honeysuckles, fuschias, roses, clematis, passion flowers, myrtles, scabier, cerina carpis, lotus spermus, and maurandia Barclayana, in which two long sprays of the last-mentioned climbers have jutted out from the wall, and entwined themselves together, like the handle of an antique basket. The rich profusion of leaves, those of the lotus spermus, comparatively rounded and green, soft in texture and colour, with a darker patch in the middle, like the leaf of the old gum geranium; those of the maurandia, so bright, and shining, and sharply outlined—the stalks equally graceful in their varied green, and the roseate bells of the one contrasting and harmonising so finely with the rich violet flowers of the other, might really form a study for a painter. I never saw anything more graceful in quaint and cunning art than this bit of simple nature. But nature often takes a way to outvie her skilful and ambitious handmaidens, and is always certain to succeed in the combination.

head keeper, her only son head gardener, of the lord of the manor; but both were dead; and she, with an orphan grandchild, a thoughtful boy of eight or nine years old, now gained a scanty subsistence from the produce of their little dairy, their few poultry, their honey (have I not said that a row of bee-hives held their station on the sunny side of the garden?) and the fruit and flowers which little Dick and the old donkey carried in their season to Belford every market-day.

Besides these their accustomed sources of income, Mrs King and Dick neglected no means to earn an honest penny. They stripped the downy spikes of the bulrushes to stuff cushions and pillows, and wove the rushes themselves into mats. Poor Dick was as handy as a girl; and in the long winter evenings he would plait the straw hats in which he went to Belford market, and knit the stockings, which, kept rather for show than for use, were first assumed to go to church on Sundays, and then laid aside for the week. So exact was their economy.

The only extravagance in which Mrs King indulged herself was keeping a pet spaniel, the descendant of a breed for which her husband had been famous, and which was so great a favourite, that it ranked next to Dick in her affections, and next to his grandmother in Dick's. The first time that I ever saw them, this pretty dog had brought her kind mistress into no small trouble.

We had been taking a drive through these beautiful lanes, never more beautiful than when the richly tinted autumnal foliage contrasts with the deep emerald hue of the autumnal herbage, and were admiring the fine effect of the majestic oaks, whose lower branches almost touched the clear water which reflected so brightly the bright blue sky, when Mrs King, who was well known to my father, advanced to the gate of her lattice court, and modestly requested to speak with him.

The group in front of the cottage door was one which it was impossible to contemplate without strong interest. The poor widow, in her neat crimped cap, her well-worn mourning gown, her apron and handkerchief, coarse, indeed, and of cheap material, but delicately clean, her grey hair parted on her brow, and her pale intelligent countenance, stood leaning against the doorway, holding in one thin trembling hand a letter newly opened, and in the other her spectacles, which she had been fain to take off, half hoping that they had played her false, and that the ill-omened epistle would not be found to contain what had so grieved her. Dick, a fine rosy boy, stout and manly for his years, sat on the ground with Chloe in his arms, giving vent to a most unmanly fit of crying; and Chloe, a dog worthy of Edwin Landseer's pencil, a large and beautiful spaniel, of the scarce old English breed, brown and white, with shining wavy hair feathering her thighs and legs, and clustering into curls towards her tail and forehead, and upon the long glossy magnificent ears which gave so much richness to her fine expressive countenance, looked at him wistfully, with eyes that expressed the fullest sympathy in his affliction, and stooped to lick his hand, and nestled her head in his bosom, as if trying, so far as her caresses had the power, to soothe and comfort him.

"And so, sir," continued Mrs King, who had been telling her little story to my father, whilst I had been admiring her pet, "this Mr Poulton, the tax-gatherer, because I refused to give him our Chloe which my boy is so fond of that he shares his meals with her, poor fellow, has laid an information against us for keeping a sporting dog—I don't know what the proper word is—and had us surcharged; and the first that ever I

have heard of it is by this letter, by which I find that I must pay I don't know how much money by Saturday next, or else my goods will be seized and sold. And I have but just managed to pay my rent, and where to get a farthing I can't tell. I dare say he would let us off now if I would but give him Chloe; but that I can't find in my heart to do. He's a hard man, and a bad dog-master. I've all along been afraid that we must part with Chloe, now that she's growing up like, because of our living so near the preserves."

"Oh, grandmother!" interrupted Dick, "poor Chloe!"

"But I can't give her to him. Don't cry so, Dick! I'd sooner have my little goods sold, and lie upon the bare boards. I should not mind parting with her if she were taken good care of, but I will never give her to him."

"Is this the first you have heard of the matter?" inquired my father; "you ought to have had notice in time to appeal."

"I never heard a word till to-day."

"Poulton seems to say that he sent a letter nevertheless, and offers to prove the sending, if need be; it's not in my division, and I am afraid that in this matter of the surcharge I can do nothing," observed my father, "though I have no doubt but it's a rascally trick to come by the dog. She's a pretty creature," continued he, stooping to pat her, and examining her head and mouth with the air of a connoisseur in canine affairs. "A very fine creature! How old is she?"

"Not quite a twelvemonth, sir. She was pupped on the sixteenth of last October, grandmother's birthday, of all the days in the year," said Dick, somewhat comforted by his visitor's evident sympathy.

"The sixteenth of October! Then Mr Poulton may bid good bye to his surcharge; for unless she was six months old on the fifth of April, she cannot be taxed for this year—so this letter is so much waste paper. I'll write this very night to the chairman of the commissioners, and manage the matter for you. And I'll also write to Master Poulton, and let him know that I'll acquaint the board if he gives you any farther trouble. You're sure that you can prove the day she was pupped?" continued his worship, highly delighted. "Very lucky! You'll have nothing to pay for her till next half year, and then I'm afraid that this fellow Poulton will insist upon her being entered as a sporting dog, which is fourteen shillings. But that's a future concern. As to the surcharge, I'll take care of that. A beautiful creature, is not she, Mary? Very lucky that we happened to drive this way." And with kind adieux to Dick and his grandmother, who were as grateful as people could be, we departed.

About a week after, Dick and Chloe in their turn appeared at our cottage. All had gone right in the matter of the surcharge. The commissioners had decided in Mrs King's favour, and Mr Poulton had been forced to succumb. But his grandmother had considered the danger of offending their good landlord Sir John, by keeping a sporting dog so near his coverts, and also the difficulty of paying the tax; and both she and Dick had made up their minds to offer Chloe to my father. He had admired her, and every body said that she was as good a dog-master as Mr Poulton was a bad one; and he came sometimes coursing to Ashley End, and then perhaps he would let them both see poor Chloe; "for grandmother," added Dick, "though she seemed somehow ashamed to confess as much, was at the bottom of her heart pretty nigh as fond of her as he was himself. Indeed, he did not know who could help being fond of Chloe, she had so many pretty ways." And Dick, making manful battle against the tears that would start into his eyes, almost as full of affection as the eyes of Chloe herself, and hugging his beautiful pet, who seemed upon her part to have a presentiment of the evil that awaited her, sat down as requested in the hall, whilst my father considered his proposition.

Upon the whole, it seemed to us kindest to the parties concerned, the Widow King, Dick, and Chloe, to accept the gift. Sir John was a kind man, and a good landlord, but he was also a keen sportsman; and it was quite certain that he would have no great taste for a dog of such high sporting blood close to his best preserves; the keeper also would probably seize hold of such a neighbour as a scapegoat, in case of any deficiency in the number of hares and pheasants; and then their great enemy, Mr Poulton, might avail him-

self of some technical deficiency to bring Mrs King within the clutch of a surcharge. There might not always be an oversight in that Shylock's bond, nor a wise judge, young or old, to detect it if there were. So that, upon due consideration, my father (determined, of course, to make a proper return for the present) agreed to consider Chloe as his own property; and Dick having seen her very comfortably installed in clean dry straw in a warm stable, and fed in a manner which gave a satisfactory specimen of her future diet, and being himself regaled with plum-cake and cherry brandy (a liquor of which he had, he said, heard much talk, and which proved, as my father had augured, exceedingly cheering and consolatory in the moment of affliction), departed in much better spirits than could have been expected after such a separation.

I myself, duly appreciating the merits of Chloe, was a little jealous for my own noble Dash, whom she resembled, with a slight inferiority of size and colouring—much such a resemblance as Viola, I suppose, bore to Sebastian. But upon being reminded of the affinity of the two dogs, and of our singular good fortune in having two such beautiful spaniels under our roof, my objections were entirely removed.

Under the same roof they did not seem likely to continue. When sent after to the stable the next morning, Chloe was missing. Every body declared that the door had not been opened, and the boy who had her in charge vowed that the key had never been out of his pocket. But accusations and affirmations were equally useless—the bird was flown. Of course she had returned to Ashley End. And upon being sent for to her old abode, Dick was found preparing to bring her to Aberleigh; and Mrs King suggested, that, having been accustomed to live with them, she would perhaps sooner get accustomed to the kitchen fireside than to a stable, however comfortable.

The suggestion was followed. A mat was placed by the side of the kitchen fire; much pains were taken to coax the shy stranger (Ben, who loved and understood dogs, devoting himself to the task of making himself agreeable to this gentle and beautiful creature); and she seemed so far reconciled as to suffer his caresses, to lap a little milk when sure that nobody saw her, and even to bridle with instinctive coquetry, when Dash, head and tail up, advanced with a sort of stately and conscious courtesy to examine into the claims of the new comer. For the first evening all looked promising; but on the next morning, nobody knew how or when, Chloe eloped to her old quarters.

Again she was fetched back; this time to the parlour; and again she ran away. Then she was tied up, and she gnawed the string; chained up, and she slipped the collar; and we began to think, that unless we could find some good home for her at a distance, there was nothing for it but to return her altogether to Mrs King, when a letter from a friend at Bath gave a new aspect to Chloe's affairs.

The letter was from a dear and charming friend of mine—a young married lady, with a very amiable invalid husband, and one lovely little girl, a damsel of some two years old, commonly called "Pretty May." They wanted a pet dog to live in the parlour, and walk out with mother and daughter—not a cross yelping Blenheim spaniel (those troublesome little creatures spoil every body's manners who is so unlucky as to possess them, the first five minutes of every morning call being invariably devoted to silencing the lap-dog and apologising to the visitor), but a large, noble animal, something, in short, as like as might be to Dash, with whom Mrs Price had a personal acquaintance, and for whom, in common with most of his acquaintances, she entertained a very decided partiality: I do not believe that there is a dog in England who has more friends than my Dash. A spaniel was wanted at Bath like my Dash; and what spaniel could be more like Dash than Chloe? A distant home was wanted for Chloe; and what home could open a brighter prospect of canine felicity than to be the pet of Mrs Price, and the playmate of Pretty May? It seemed one of those startling coincidences which amuse one by their singular fitness and propriety, and make one believe that there is more in the exploded doctrine of sympathies than can be found in our philosophy.

So, upon the matter being explained to her, thought Mrs King; and writing duly to announce the arrival of Chloe, she was deposited, with a quantity of soft hay, in a large hamper, and conveyed into Reading by my father himself, who would entrust to none other the office of delivering her to the coachman, and charging that very civil member of a very civil body of men to have especial care of the pretty creature, who was parted with for no other fault than an excess of affection and fidelity to her first kind protectors.

Nothing could exceed the brilliancy of her arrival. Pretty May, the sweet smiling child of a sweet smiling mother, had been kept up a full hour after her usual time to welcome the stranger, and was so charmed with this her first living toy, that it was difficult to get her to bed. She divided her own supper with poor Chloe, hungry after her long journey;

rolled with her upon the Turkey carpet, and at last fell asleep with her arms clasped round her new pet's neck, and her bright face, coloured like lilies and caresses, flung across her body; Chloe enduring these caresses with a careful, quiet gentleness, which immediately won for her the hearts of the lovely mother, of the fond father (for to an accomplished and right-minded man, in delicate health, what a treasure is a little prattling girl, his only one!) of two grandmothers, of three or four young aunts, and of the whole tribe of nursery attendants. Never was debut so successful, as Chloe's first appearance in South Place.

As her new dog had been Pretty May's last thought at night, so was it her first on awakening. They shared their breakfast as they had shared the supper; and immediately after breakfast, mother and daughter, attended by nurserymaid and footman, sallied forth to provide proper luxuries for Chloe's accommodation. First they purchased a sheepskin rug; then a splendid porcelain trough for water, and a porcelain dish to match, for food; then a spaniel basket, duly lined, and stuffed, and curtained—a splendid piece of caning upholstery; then a necklace-like collar with silver bells, which was left to have the address engraved upon the clasp; and then May, finding herself in the vicinity of a hosier and a shoemaker, bethought herself of a want which undoubtedly had not occurred to any other of her party, and holding up her own pretty little foot, demanded "tik ticks and boo those for Tloë."

For two days did Chloe endure the petting and the luxuries. On the third she disappeared. Great was the consternation in South Place. Pretty May cried as she had never been known to cry before; and papa, mamma, grandmamma, aunts, nursery and house maids, fretted and wondered, wondered and fretted, and vented their distress in every variety of exclamation, from the refined language of the drawing-room to the patois of a Somersetshire kitchen. Rewards were offered, and handbills dispersed over the town. She was cried, and she was advertised; and at last, giving up every hope of her recovery, Mrs Price wrote to me.

It happened that we received the letter on one of those soft November days, which sometimes intervene between the rough winds of October and the crisp frosts of Christmas, and which, although too dirty under foot to be quite pleasant for walking, are yet, during the few hours that the sun is above the horizon, mild enough for an open carriage in our shady lanes, strewn as they are at that period with the yellow leaves of the elm, whilst the hedgerows are still rich with the tawny foliage of the oak, and the rich colouring of the hawthorn and the bramble. It was such weather as the Americans generally enjoy at this season, and call by the pretty name of the Indian summer. And we resolved to avail ourselves of the fineness of the day to drive to Ashley End, and inform Mrs King and Dick (who we felt ought to know) of the loss of Chloe, and our fear according with Mrs Price's that she had been stolen; but our persuasion, which was also that of Mrs Price, that fall into whatever hands she might, she was too beautiful and valuable not to ensure good usage.

On the way we were overtaken by the good widow's landlord, returning from hunting, in his red coat and top boots, who was also bound to Ashley End. As he rode chatting by the side of the carriage we could not forbear telling him our present errand, and the whole story of poor Chloe. How often, whilst out being particularly uncharitable in judging of our neighbours, we have the gratification of finding them even better than we had supposed! He blamed us for not having thought well enough of him to put the whole affair into his management from the first, and exclaimed against us for fearing that he would compromise the preserves and the pheasant-shooting with such an attachment as had subsisted between his good old tenant and her faithful dog. "By Jove!" cried he, "I would have paid the tax myself rather than they should have been parted. But it's too late to talk of that now, for, of course, the dog is stolen. Eighty miles is too far even for a spaniel to find his way back! Carried by coach, too! I would give twenty pounds willingly to replace her with old Dame King and Master Dick. By the way, we must see what can be done for that boy—he's a fine spanking fellow. We must consult his grandmother. The descendant of two faithful servants has an hereditary claim to all that can be done for him. How could you imagine that I should be thinking of those covers! I that am as great a dog-lover as Dame King herself! I have a great mind to be very angry with you."

These words, spoken in the good sportsman's earnest, hearty, joyous, kindly voice (that ought to have given us assurance of his kindly nature—I have a religious faith in voices), these words brought us within sight of Ashley End, and there, in front of the cottage, we saw a group which fixed all our attention: Chloe her own identical self—poor, dear Chloe, apparently just arrived, dirty, weary, jaded, wet, lying in Dick's arms as he sat on the ground, feeding her with the bacon and cabbage, his own and his grandmother's dinner, all the contents of the platter; and she, so happy to eat, wagging her tail as if she would wag off; now licking Mrs King's hands as the good dame leant over her, the tears streaming from her eyes; now kissing Dick's honest face, who broke in loud laughter for very joy, and, with looks that spoke as plain as ever looks did speak, "Here I am com-

home again, best love, she left, Chloe I hope, say creature!

Is the 3d published curious? Our real Mexico, some less civilisation to have ported for we wrote work of the subj the great by runn title of are culle Spanish, describe

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home again to those whom I love best—to those who best love me!" Poor dear Chloe! Even we whom she left, sympathised with her fidelity. Poor dear Chloe! there we found her, and there, I need not hope, say, we left her, one of the happiest of living creatures.

MEXICAN ANTIQUITIES.

In the 35th number of the Foreign Quarterly Review, published in October 1836, there is an exceedingly curious and surprising article on Mexican Antiquities. Our readers will recollect an article of our own on Mexico, in the 188th number of the Journal, in which some leaning was shown to the theory by which the civilisation found in that country by Cortes is supposed to have originated on the spot, instead of being imported from any region of the elder continent. When we wrote, we had not had access to any very recent work on the antiquities of New Spain, and therefore gave but an imperfect account of that department of the subject. The omission may be now remedied, to the great entertainment, we believe, of our readers, by running over some of the leading points in the article of the Foreign Quarterly, the materials of which are culled from three recent works, two French and one Spanish, in which the Mexican antiquities have been described and depicted with the greatest possible care.

It must be novel intelligence to the great bulk of our readers, that in Mexico there exist ancient temples, palaces, pyramids, idols, and sculptures, equal in dimensions and in style, and bearing a remarkable resemblance, to the similar remains in Egypt. To pursue the cursory review given by our learned contemporary, "Pyramids, not inferior to the Egyptian, exist in many parts of the Mexican territories and of New Spain. Some of these pyramids are of larger base than the Egyptian, and composed of equally permanent materials. Vestiges of noble architecture and sculpture are visible at Cholula, Otumba, Oaxaca, Mitlan, and Tlascala. The mountain of Tescopa is nearly covered with ruins of ancient buildings. The ancient town of Palenque exhibits not only excellent workmanship in the temples, palaces, private houses, and baths, but a boldness of design in the architect, as well as skill in the execution, which will not shrink from a comparison with the works of at least the earlier ages of Egyptian power. In the sanctuaries of Palenque are found sculptured representations of idols, which resemble the most ancient gods of Egypt and of Syria; planispheres and zodiacs exist, which exhibit a superior astronomical and chronological system to that which was possessed by the Egyptians. At Mitlan there exist the remains of a palace which is of considerable extent. Its architecture, though distinguished by characteristics peculiarly American, and different from that of any nation with which we are familiar, is to our view marked by features of stately grandeur and melancholy beauty. The roof of the portico is supported by plain cylindrical columns, no type of which we believe elsewhere exists. The façade of the palace is covered with a beautiful mat-work or basket scroll, which is a characteristic ornament of all the Tultecan monuments, which is often found in the sepulchral chambers of the same extraordinary people, and which Rosellini, by a singular coincidence, found in those of Egypt, among others of the magnificent scroll-ornaments, copies of which decorate his *l'irraisons*. It is curious that the ground plan of this palace is the Egyptian Tau. Finally, statues sculptured in a purely classical style have been found in the neighbourhood of Otumba, Mitlan, Xochicalco, and the magnificent flower temple of Oaxaca. Vases, agreeing both in shape and ornament with the earliest specimens of Egyptian and Etrurian pottery, have been found in their sepulchral excavations. Moreover, evidences of an amount of civilisation and of social comfort, which are not to be found among the popular and boasted monuments of Egypt, are furnished by the architectural memorials of this great, singular, and almost unknown people. Roads are to be found not only in the vicinity of their great cities, but at a considerable distance from them; artificially constructed, like the Roman military roads, of large squared blocks of stone. These roads, on the same principle as the railroad, affect a continued level. They are in fact viaducts as contrasted with aqueducts, which these people also constructed. Where they traverse acclivities, they are parapeted, and the evidences both of regular post-stations at regular intervals, and of the regular division of the distances upon the principle of our milestones upon turnpike-roads, are still to be observed. Bridges, constructed of the same durable materials, and traversing mountain torrents, are also to be found. In these bridges, an approach to the principle of the arch and key-stone may be in a few instances discerned; but generally they display the primitive and obvious form of architraves of stone, super-imposed on two or more piers of the same massy character and durable materials. Every feature of these structures is at once singular, ingenious, and gigantic." Lastly, there are found in Mexico evidences of the existence "of two great branches of the hieroglyphical language, both having striking affinities with the Egyptian, and yet distinguished from it by characteristics perfectly American."

* The theory of the reviewer, as will be found, is, that the better and elder class of Mexican antiquities originated with a people who possessed the country before those found by Cortes, and who bore the name of Tultecans.

From the similarity of these monuments to those existing in Egypt and other countries near the head of the Mediterranean, the reviewer infers that their authors must have been a branch of that Syrian or Canaanite family, the Anakim of Scripture, the shepherd-kings of Egypt, the Cyclopeans or Titans of Greece—a race who figure in the early and half-fabulous history of many nations besides these, as *giants* or *wandering masons*. What certainly gives great countenance to this hypothesis, is, that, at the time of the Spanish conquest, the people of Mexico had a tradition respecting a race of gigantic architects, whom they considered as the builders of the more stupendous of their ancient structures—a tradition precisely similar to that which Hesiod chronicled in the tenth century before the Christian era respecting the builders of the earlier specimens of Grecian architecture. The reviewer enters into many reasonings, to show that a branch of the Syrian race alluded to must have found its way into America, probably through the medium of Phœnician intercourse, and become the founders of a nation in Mexico, afterwards overpowered, as Rome was, by the pouring in of barbarian hordes from the north. In Mexican history—for it is well known that they had a species of written history—the conquest of the early people, or Tultecans, by the Aztecs or predecessors of the existing Mexicans, was represented as having taken place six centuries before the arrival of Cortes—namely, about the ninth century of the Christian era.

Memorials of the early race exist in the great structures which they left behind them. In the ancient city of Palenque, the Palmyra of America, there are sculptures which may be considered as authentic personal portraits. "Their physiognomy," says the reviewer, "is unlike any of the various families of the human race, with which any other sculptures or monumental records had previously rendered us familiar. Their receding forehead, their low facial angle, and the conical form of their heads, would, according to the ordinary principles of the craniologists, indicate little short of idiotism, did we not perceive, on the very monuments where the elementary data of craniology would seem to testify against them, marks of a powerful, civilised, and enlightened people. Other physiognomical characteristics, not less singular than the low angle of their facial elevation, mark the countenances of the extraordinary people thus curiously preserved for our inspection. The nose is large, long, and prominent, so much so as to amount to a deformity, when contrasted with the receding forehead. The facial line recedes in the same singular manner from the base of the nostrils to the termination of the chin. But, as if these curious physiognomical signs were not sufficient to distinguish them from any race of people with which we are acquainted, the receding angle of the lower portion of the face is grotesquely broken by an unsightly protrusion of the lower lip. These are the general characteristics of the nation. But there are some of the sculptures which depict individuals less revolting to the European standard of physiognomical beauty." In the costume, there are some striking resemblances to the Egyptian, and some as striking differences.

An almost perfect similarity in religion is made out, or attempted to be made out, by the reviewer:—"The gods of the Tultecans appear sculptured in bas-relief, in the dark inner rooms of extant temples. We will take one as an instance of the analogy to which we allude. It will be instantly seen that the idol bears no resemblance to the monstrous deformities peculiar to the gloomy superstition of the Mexicans, and which that cruel and barbarous people bathed in the blood of innumerable victims. Portrayed on the inner wall of the adytum of one of the sanctuaries belonging to the great temple of Palenque, appears the chief god of the Tultecan people. He would appear to have been their only god. He is worshipped symbolically under other forms and in other localities; but we are not familiar with any other sculptured indication of a worshipped divinity. Our opinion is, that he is strictly identifiable with the Osiris of Egypt and the Adonis of Syria: or rather, that he is the ancient god called *Adoni-Siris*—a well-known classical combination (and therefore identification) of both divinities.

In the first place, he is enthroned on a couch perfectly Egyptian in its model; it is constructed somewhat in the form of a modern couch—a cushioned plinth, resting on the claws and four limbs of the American lion. We may at once emphatically say, that there is no real difference between the above couch and that peculiarly designated as Egyptian, and which is observable in all the tombs and palaces of Egypt. The god is characterised by the same physiognomy as that which distinguishes his worshippers. He is, however, seated in the Hindoo or Asiatic fashion—not in the Egyptian, his legs being crossed under him. On his head he wears a conical cap, not differing much from that which the Osiris of Egypt wears. Two additional symbols—the one Egyptian, the other not, but equally intelligible, namely, the lotus and the column affixed to the cap—clearly indicate the same triune divinity. All the remaining appurtenances of the sculptured picture concur in establishing the same hypothesis. Another sculpture of a more extensive kind appears on the wall of another sanctuary at Palenque: it represents the same divinity, not in a human but in an animal form. Instead of being symbolised in the form of the sacred hawk, as in Egypt, surrounded by rays

of lilies, standing on the Egyptian cross, the lower end of which terminates in a heart-shaped spade—a common anaglyph on most of the Egyptian thrones—the sacred bird of the Tultecans, the rainbow-coloured pheasant of central America, is represented standing on the Tultecan cross—resembling the Christian—and with its lower extremity terminating in a similar heart-shaped spade. All the details are tasteful, and highly ornamental."

The temples of the Tultecans, "like those of the Egyptians, are all distinguished by architectural peculiarities, exclusively appertaining to the people who erected them. A high-place of three successive terraces or steps generally constitutes the platform of the temple. The terraces themselves resemble, in their sloping form, that which the Egyptian architects peculiarly affected. On the top of the high-place was an oblong rectangular court; in the centre of this court stood the temple, divided, like the cavern temples of Nubia, into three dark rooms, built of stone, and having an ark, or barn-shaped roof. The innermost of these three rooms constitutes the sanctuary. Painted sculptures decorate these rooms occasionally. Sometimes the staircase ascends the high-place in front, traversing the curvilinear terraces in a straight line to the door of the temple. Occasional variation was imparted to the square form of the area, and the triple form of the terraces, by staircases ascending to the sanctuary from each of the cardinal points. The effect of these ascending stairs is often very striking; and sometimes the picturesque effect of these peculiar terraces is rendered beautiful by a graceful irregularity, or curvilinear form, being imparted to the outward acclivity of the angle. The high-place sometimes (as at Tehuantepec) has a circular instead of a square ground-plan, and in that case will remind antiquaries of the well-known *Tepes*, or high-places of Syria. The Syrian origin of these structures would thus seem to be presumptively made out. We ought to observe, that the sloping terraces above described are made of permanent materials. They are generally constructed of large blocks of stone, sometimes arranged in regular and sometimes in irregular courses, but fitted together with true architectural skill, and covered with a stucco admirably constructed, and as hard as stone. This stucco, in some instances (as at Oaxaca and Xochicalco), was ornamented with sculptures, bearing a striking affinity in their design to the style called arabesque. It appears to have been, in some cases, covered with a purple colour, which, when these structures were in their 'high and palmy state,' must have produced a tasteful, if not a magnificent, effect.

The archetypal form of the Tultecan sacred edifices, with such varieties as we have been describing, and which distinguishes their architecture from that which characterises any extant monuments of any known nation whatever, appears to have prevailed throughout the whole extent of the regions of central America occupied by this extraordinary people. But the simple form of sacred architecture, such as we have described, was sometimes combined with other forms of civil and palatial architecture. The combination has produced architectural monuments worthy of the highest civilisation. The combination, especially, existed at the city of Palenque, where the great temple dedicated to Adoni-Siris, as we have contended, appears to unite within its gigantic precincts all the forms of architecture to which we have been just adverting. This structure [which Lord Kingsborough supposes to have been built after the model of Solomon's Temple] is calculated to awaken surprise and admiration. It may be appropriately termed an ecclesiastical city rather than a temple. It seems to be the locality of the chief cathedral church of the Tultecan religion. Within its vast precincts there appear to be a pyramidal tower, various sanctuaries, sepulchres, a small and a large quadrangular court, one surrounded by cloisters, subterranean initiatory galleries beneath—oracles, courts of justice, high-places, and cells or dwellings for the various orders of the priests. The whole combination of the buildings is encircled by a quadrilateral pilastered portico, embracing a quadrangular area, and resting on a terraced platform. This platform externally exhibits the same architectural model which we have described as characterising the single temples. It is composed of three graduated stuccoed terraces, sloping inwards, at an angle of about seventy degrees, in the form of a truncated pyramid. Four central staircases (one facing each of the cardinal points) ascend these terraces in the middle of each lateral façade of the quadrangle; and four gates, fronting the same cardinal points, conduct from the top of each staircase into the body of the building, or into the great court. The great entrance, through a pilastered gateway, fronts the east, and descends by a second flight of steps into the cloistered court. On the various pilasters of the upper terrace are the metopes, with the singular sculptures we have described. On descending the second staircase into the cloistered court, on one side appears the triple pyramidal tower, which may be inferred, from the curious distribution of little cells which surround the central room of each story, to have been employed as a place of royal or private sepulture. It would be pronounced a striking and tasteful structure according to any architectural rule. On another side of the same cloistered court is the detached temple of the chief god, to whom the whole religious building appears to have been devoted—whom we have described as bearing all the characteristics of the Syrian god Adoni-Siris, and who appears to have been the great and only god of

the nations who worshipped in this temple. Beneath the cloisters, entered by well-staircases from above, are what we believe to be the initiatory galleries. These opened into rooms, one of which has a stone couch in it, and others are distinguished by unintelligible apparatus carved in stone. The only symbol described as found within these sacred haunts, is, however, perfectly Asiatic and perfectly intelligible—we mean two contending serpents. The remnant of an altar, or high-place, occupies the centre of the cloistered quadrangle. The rest of the edifice is taken up with courts, palaces, detached temples, open divans, baths, and streets of priestly cells or houses, in a greater or less degree of dilapidation.

But we have said enough to demonstrate what this building must have been in its undecayed and primitive condition; and what means for royal or national pomp, or priestly procession, were afforded by the great eastward staircase ascending to the chief gateway, and by the descending staircase leading from the upper plastered terrace through the same gateway into the cloistered quadrangle; distinguished as it was by the vicinity of imposing sacred structures such as we have described. A poetical imagination may readily conceive what the effect of the magnificent costume of the Tulecan assemblages must have been, in the midst of the forms of wild but sublime architecture, lighted up at the people's yearly intercalary festival of the 'Feast of Lamps' (which they had in common with Egypt, China, and Syria), by vases of burning aromatics and torches of the fragrant *ule tree*.

Every circumstance tends to prove that the creed of this ancient American people was a form of patriarchal deism, which, however, permitted some few varieties of symbolic representation. It is perfectly clear, from the few records of their religious rites which have come down to us, and which are principally derived from the extraordinary rolls of American papyrus, on which their beautiful hieroglyphical system is preserved (there is one of considerable extent in the Dresden Museum), that they were simple as well as innocent. Not only does it appear that they had no human sacrifices, but no animal sacrifices whatever. Flowers and fruits were the only offerings made to the presiding divinity of their temples. How different such a religious system and such a divinity were from the hideous idols and sanguinary sacrifices of the Mexican people, it is not requisite to urge.

We are unable, in such confined limits, to go into the reasonings of the reviewer for a communication between Syria and America in early times. Enough has perhaps been presented to convince our readers that his hypothesis is not destitute of probability.

STORY OF THE "BONNIE EARL OF MORAY."

THE Earl of Moray, whose personal qualifications acquired for him the appellation of the "Bonnie Earl," was a son of Lord Doune, but succeeded to the title of Moray by marrying Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the celebrated Regent, illegitimate brother to Queen Mary. As son-in-law to a person so distinguished, and inheritor of his estates, the young Earl of Moray naturally possessed a high degree of consideration in the state, and particularly with the Presbyterian party, of which the Regent had been so long the leader. The earl's character, indeed, was such as to win him universal esteem; to the attractive beauty of his countenance and form, he added a most amiable disposition, and perfect skill in all the chivalric accomplishments of the age. It is scarcely to be wondered at, therefore, that he should have been one of the most popular noblemen of the day, especially as the nation in general had by that time irrevocably attached itself to the religious party of which he was a leading member. To the Presbyterian party, the king, James VI., also belonged, though he was under the necessity, from the number and power of the nobles who still remained Catholics, of holding the balance of his favour evenly between the professors of the old and the new persuasions. Of these Catholic peers, the Earl of Huntly was the chief, a man who bore rather a good character, but was at heart ambitious and vindictive. It was owing to a feud between Huntly and Moray, that the circumstances which we are about to relate occurred, and which ended in the tragic and untimely death of the "bonnie Earl of Moray."

The real grounds of this feud consisted in the claims of the Gordon family to the possession of the earldom of Moray, of which they had been deprived when it was bestowed by Queen Mary upon the Regent. This deep-seated cause of dissension had been long gathering strength from the minor animosities which arose out of it, and in particular was aggravated by an act of Lord Moray, which it is impossible to justify. In his capacity as sheriff, the Earl of Huntly endeavoured to bring to justice a person accused of violating the laws of the land. This felon was taken into protection by Moray, for some reason which is not recorded. Huntly, it may well be supposed, was

highly displeased at this, and with a party of men proceeded to Moray's castle of Darnaway, for the purpose of getting possession of the felon's person. This expedition, unfortunately, terminated in widening the breach between the noblemen. John Gordon, a brother of Gordon of Cluny, and then in attendance on Huntly, was killed by a shot from the Earl of Moray's castle. Whether Moray was personally blamed for this act, does not appear. Certain it is, however, that the hostility between the two families assumed from that hour a more decided character than it had ever worn before.

This event took place a short time previous to the year 1591, and was not immediately followed by any further exhibition of animosity. In the meantime, Campbell of Calder, a friend of Moray, became an object of hostility to certain of the principal men of the Campbell family, on account of his being preferred as tutor of the young Earl of Argyle. Uniting in purpose with these men, Huntly formed a concerted scheme, in which, strange to say, the chancellor of the kingdom, Lord Thirlstain, concurred, for taking off Moray and Campbell of Calder by one sweep of vengeance. The late Mr Donald Gregory, in his work on the Highlands,* for the first time exposed the particulars of this double plot, than which nothing could be more strikingly illustrative of the character of a time when the highest men in the kingdom, so far from setting an example for the observance of the laws which they made, thought themselves at liberty on all occasions to violate them at their pleasure. By persuading the king that Moray had been concerned in the conspiracy of the turbulent Earl of Bothwell, Huntly obtained a commission to apprehend Moray, and bring him to Edinburgh for trial.

On the afternoon of the 8th of February 1591-2, Huntly, attended by a strong body of horse, set out from the house of the provost of Edinburgh, where the king then lodged for security. The object of the journey, Huntly gave out, was to attend upon a horse-race at Leith; instead of which, he turned to the westward, and directed his course across the Queensferry to Dumbriess House, where he understood the Earl of Moray had taken up his residence for a time with his mother. About midnight, Huntly reached his destination. He surrounded the house with his men, and summoned Moray to surrender. Even had this been complied with immediately, the same consequences, it is clear, would have ensued, Huntly's determination being fixed. The enemy of himself and his house knocking at his gates at the dead of night—encompassing the walls with armed and vindictive retainers—such a summons as this was not one from which the young earl could expect moderation or justice to follow. He resolved to defend the house to the death. A gun, fired from within, mortally wounded one of the Gordons, and the passions of the assailants and their leader were excited to the highest pitch. To force an entrance, they set fire to the doors, and the house seemed to be on the point of being enveloped in flames. In this emergency, Moray took counsel with his friend Dunbar, sheriff of the county, who chanced to be with him on that night. "Let us not stay," said Dunbar, "to be burned in the flaming house; I will go out foremost, and the Gordons, taking me for your lordship, will kill me, while you escape in the confusion." After giving utterance to this noble offer, the generous Dunbar did not hesitate an instant, but threw himself among the assailants, and fell immediately, as he had anticipated, beneath their swords. At first it seemed as if this act of heroic devotion would have accomplished its purpose. The young earl had passed out immediately after his friend, and had the fortune to escape through the ranks of the Gordons. He directed his flight to the rocks of the neighbouring beach, and most probably would have got off in the darkness, had not his path been pointed out to his foes by the silken tassels of his helmet, which had caught fire as he passed out through the flames of the house. A headstrong and revengeful cadet of the Huntly family—Gordon of Buckie—was the first, it is said, who overtook the flying earl, and wounded him mortally. While Moray lay in the throes of death at the feet of his ruthless murderer, Huntly himself came up to the spot, when Buckie, exclaiming, "By heaven, my lord, you shall be as deep in as I," forced his chief to strike the dying man. "Huntly," says Sir Walter Scott, "with a wavering hand, struck the expiring earl in the face. Mindful of his superior beauty, even in that moment of parting life, Moray stammered out the dying words, 'You have spoiled a better face than your own.'"

The perpetrators of this barbarous act hurried from the scene, leaving the corpse of the earl lying on the beach, and the house of Dumbriess in flames. Though but little afraid of any consequences that

might ensue, Huntly did not choose to return to Edinburgh to be the narrator of what had passed. The messenger he chose for this purpose, strange to say, was no other than the person on whom the deepest share of guilt lay—Gordon of Buckie. This bold man hesitated not to fulfil his chief's commands. He rode post to the king's presence, and informed his majesty of all that had occurred. Finding, however, that his night's work was not likely to acquire its doers any credit, he left the city as hastily as he had entered it. By some it is supposed that Gordon could not have seen the king, who had gone out at an early hour to hunt. It is known, at least, that, with apparent unconsciousness of the deed that had been perpetrated, James pursued his sport for several hours in the early part of that day. On his return to the city, his majesty found the streets filled with lamentations for the murder of Moray, and strong suspicions entertained that he himself had authorised Huntly to perpetrate the deed. Dumbriess House being visible from the grounds of Inverleith and Wardie, it was alleged that the king must have seen the smoking ruins in his hunting—nay, that he had chosen that quarter for his sport, on purpose to gratify his eye with the spectacle.

The popularity of the late earl, on account of his personal qualities, and as a leading Presbyterian, rendered the people blindly severe for the moment to James, whom there is no real cause for supposing accessory to the guilt of the Gordons. The fact of the conspiracy which we have already mentioned at length, is almost a positive exculpation of the king. One verse in the fine old ballad, which we shall give immediately, says that Moray "was the queen's slave." A traditional anecdote is the only support which the ballad receives for a circumstance utterly discredited by history. James, says the story, found the Earl of Moray sleeping one day in an arbour with a ribbon about his neck, which his majesty had given to the queen. On seeking her majesty's presence, the king found the ribbon on her neck, and was convinced that he had mistaken one ribbon for another. But, continues the story, the ribbon worn by Moray was in truth the queen's, and had been only restored to her in time to blind his majesty, by the agency of some one who had observed the king's jealous observation of Moray asleep.

To return, however, from tradition to history. The ferment caused in Edinburgh by the news of Moray's death, was aggravated tenfold, when, on the same day, Lady Doune, mother of the ill-fated nobleman, arrived at Leith in a boat, carrying with her the bodies of her son and his devoted friend Dunbar. The mournful lady took this step in order to stimulate the vengeance of the laws against the murderers of her son. When the news reached the king, that Lady Doune was about to expose the mangled bodies to the gaze of the multitude, he forbade the bodies to be brought into the city, conceiving justly that the spectacle was not only an unseemly one, but that the populace were excited enough already. Defeated in her first wish, Lady Doune caused a picture to be drawn of her son's remains, and inclosing it in a piece of lawn cloth, she brought it to the king, uncovered it before him, and with vehement lamentations cried for justice on the slayers of "her beautiful! her brave!" She then took out three bullets found in Moray's body, one of which she gave to the king, another to one of his nobles, and the third she reserved to herself, "to be bestowed on him who should hinder justice!"

As far as he could, James fulfilled the demands of justice, though the times would not permit him to punish the leaders. Two servants of Huntly were executed for the deed; but the earl himself had fled to the north, where he was much more powerful than James, king of Scotland as the latter was. After some time, however, to recover the royal favour, which, to his credit, James obstinately withheld till some atonement was made, Huntly surrendered himself, and was confined for a time in Blackness Castle. He was not brought to any trial, and was liberated on bail. Gordon of Buckie, the true murderer, lived for nearly fifty years after Moray's death, and in his latter days expressed great contrition for the act of which he had been guilty. From punishment by the hand of man, the unsettled state of society and of the laws succeeded in screening him.

The beautiful person and great accomplishments of the unfortunate nobleman whose melancholy fate has been narrated, have been embalmed in the music of his country's verse. The last stanza of the following ballad has been termed by Burns deeply affecting, and so every one must feel it to be:—

Ye Highlands, and ye Lowlands,
Oh, where have ye been!
They hae slain the Earl o' Murray,
And laid him on the green.
"Now was he to be you, Huntly!
And wherefore did ye sae?"
I bade you bring him wi' you,
But forbade you him to slay."

He was a brave gallant,
And he rade at the ring;
And the bonnie Earl o' Murray,
Oh! he micht ha' been a king.
He was a brave gallant,
And he rade at the gluvie;
And the bonnie Earl o' Murray,
Oh! he was the Queen's luvie!
Oh! lang will his lady
Look over the Castle Doune,
Ere she see the Earl o' Murray
Come sounding through the town.

Nearly at the same time with Moray's death, Camp-

* We have long wished for an opportunity of advertising to this work and its author, and lamented author. By unvarnished facts for five years in exploring the public records of the kingdom, Mr Gregory produced a volume, in which the Highland history of two centuries was for the first time placed upon a firm basis. To speak rigidly, according to our own standard of useful service, the labour was greater than the occasion merited; time and talent might have been better spent; yet what was done was done from a generous and elevated feeling, and it was also done in the most masterly manner. The sudden and accidental death of Mr Gregory, which took place in October 1830, was the more to be deplored, as his powers of application in antiquarian research had recommended him to the patronage of the government, and he had every reason to expect that he would have speedily been transferred to a sphere of more extensive usefulness.

bell of Calder fell by the hand of an assassin. The young Earl of Argyll fortunately escaped the snares of the conspirators.

Such is the story of one of the numberless fencible quarrels and deeds of violence which disfigure the history of Scotland, and to which it is instructive, though painful, to look back from these comparatively peaceful and happy times.

LITERARY OBSCURITIES.

We do not know any thing more plaguy in a small way, than obscurity of meaning in works which we may require to peruse for the sake of information. Confusion of ideas in a poem, novel, or any other literary trifle, is of little moment; at all events, one does not expect precision of language in light fanciful productions, and so a little obscurity in them is not regarded as of any consequence. Our expectations are very different in perusing works of science, or those which refer to matters of solid utility or edification. Obscurity of meaning is unpardonable in such cases; it betrays a carelessness on the part of the writer as to whether we understand him or not, which is any thing but courteous towards his readers. Yet, one can hardly take up any work of a solid cast, without finding numberless obscurities in it. Is there one of our readers who has not the same complaint to make? We should think not. How frequently, in works of respectable authorship, do we stumble upon a sentence or a paragraph which it is impossible to elucidate! The eye reads it, but the mind remains unimpressed with its sense. We see an array of well-spelled words, with a due infusion of commas and semicolons; but as to what the said words, and commas, and semicolons, mean—what the writer would be at—we are totally at a loss to conjecture. And thus the sentence or paragraph is got over, with a sigh of disappointment, and we proceed to other sentences and paragraphs with the faint hope that we may pick up a straggling bit of clearness, from which a light may be reflected on the previous obscurities.

Obscurities in literary composition arise from different causes. We shall enumerate a few of them. The first, and we should suppose the most prevalent, is thoughtlessness in the writer. Knowing the subject himself, he does not reflect upon the possibility of others being less or more ignorant of it. He therefore writes on and on through thick and thin; describing in a few high-sounding words what would require a page of simple definition; and never, for a moment, imagining that not one man in fifty can follow him. The writer who proceeds in this manner commits a serious blunder. Unless the work be specially intended for a particular learned class, the safest course is to write as if readers were almost entirely ignorant of the subject. The meaning cannot be made too clear, for the bulk of people have no time to sit pondering over an obscurity in language. They like to get to the bottom of every thing they read without any botheration. In connection with this cause of obscurity, we may point to the equally common error among writers, of infusing a certain quantity of hard words into their language. They seem often to go purposely out of their way to catch a word which will look fine and learned-like, when some poor little ordinary word, understood by every body, would have answered all the purpose. Oh, how we do dislike these difficult, high-sounding, long-tailed words!

The second cause of obscurity is slovenliness of style. The English language, though the most honest, downright language in the world, possesses a few words, which, if not properly handled, have the power of rendering the meaning of sentences doubtful or ambiguous. The proper management of these words is perhaps the chief difficulty in construction. The words to which we allude, are those which grammarians call *pronouns*; that is, words used for or in place of nouns, such as *it* or *its*, *whose*, *whom*, *which*, and so forth. These words are generally used in order to save a repetition of the nouns for which they are an equivalent; and this is a good reason for their use. Unfortunately, however, they are frequently used in reference to other words than those for which they are an equivalent, and from this slovenliness of style, obscurities and false meanings arise. An error of this description occurs most frequently in long sentences, in which the writer, from a desire to give a fine rolling sound to his language, gets into a state of mental confusion, and loses sight of the just connection which ought to subsist among his different parts of speech. Thus, it is often impossible to tell to what things or persons his *it*, or his *whom*, or his *whiches*, refer. Along with

this fertile cause of error in composition, we should place the frequent use of the words *latter* and *former*. These two words are the greatest pests in the English language, and ought to be banished from the dictionary for the confusion they create in the language of most writers. In the following two sentences, which occur in a learned work published a short time ago by an eminent London house, we find a very pretty example of thorough obscurity, arising from the causes just mentioned. "When we say, in astronomy, that the earth revolves round the sun, or that the moon revolves round the earth, we do not speak with absolute correctness, for in all such cases both bodies are revolving round the common centre of inertia of the two. In the case of the sun and earth, as the former is a million times larger than the latter, the common centre of the two being just so much nearer *its* centre than to the centre of the earth, is really within *its* body or circumference." It is here utterly impossible to tell what the author means. The language is bewildering. The noun to which the two *itses* apply, is undiscoverable.

The only writer on grammar, who, as far as we are aware, points out the extreme liability to misuse the pronouns, is Cobbett, and we recommend a perusal of his observations on the subject to all persons not experienced in composition, and who wish to write correctly. "The word *it* (he remarks in his Grammar, paragraph 194) is the greatest trouble that I know of in language. It is so small, and so convenient, that few are careful enough in using it. Writers seldom spare this word. Whenever they are at a loss for either a nominative or an objective to their sentence, they, without any kind of ceremony, clap in an *it*. A very remarkable instance of this pressing of poor *it* into actual service, contrary to the laws of grammar and of sense, occurs in a piece of composition, where we might with justice insist on correctness. This piece is on the subject of grammar. I allude to two sentences in the 'Charge of the Rev. Dr Abercrombie to the senior class of the Philadelphia Academy,' published in 1806, which sentences have been selected and republished by Mr Lindley Murray, as a testimonial of the merits of his Grammar: and which sentences are, by Mr Murray, given to us in the following words:—'The unwearied exertions of this gentleman have done more towards elucidating the obscurities, and embellishing the structure of our language, than any other writer on the subject. Such a work has long been wanted; and, from the success with which it is executed, cannot be too highly appreciated.' We need not quote the sarcastic rallery in which Cobbett indulges over the false construction of this sentence. The most common observer will perceive that the leading error consists in making the *exertions* a *writer*, which is done by leaving out the words *than those*—"than those of any other writer." The next error is saying "such a work," when no work has previously been spoken of, and then pressing *it* into the service in reference to this unspoken-of production. "If we may be allowed (concludes this caustic observer) in any case to laugh at the ignorance of our fellow-creatures, that case certainly does arise, when we see a professed grammarian (Lindley Murray), the author of voluminous precepts and examples on the subject of grammar, producing, in imitation of the professors of invaluable medical secrets, testimonials vouching for the efficacy of his literary panacea, and when, in those very testimonials, we find most flagrant instances of bad grammar."

It is much to be lamented that literary composition is not more generally introduced into schools. This is perhaps the weakest point in the whole of the ordinary routine of juvenile instruction. It is very commonly imagined that the learning of Latin and English grammar is sufficient to give a young person a knowledge of construction. This is a decided error. As Grammars have hitherto been written, they are little else than a mere collection of jargon. No boy or girl can learn construction from them. They will tell you that *it* is a pronoun, but leave you in ignorance as to how *it* is to be used; therefore the knowledge of *it* being a pronoun is barren, useless. It is much the same with all the other parts of speech. The names are learned which are given to classes of words, but hardly in a way calculated for practical benefit. The consequence of this is, that people acquire a knowledge of literary composition only by experience after leaving school. A gentleman lately mentioned to us, that, while he was one morning lying ruminating in bed, the meaning of one of Ruddiman's rules in Latin syntax dawned for the first time on his understanding. A recollection of the beatings he had endured for not comprehending it while at school, was the cause of his now pondering upon its mysterious import. We believe that there are thousands of persons who could tell a similar tale.

English grammar, we are afraid, will never be taught advantageously, till it is intimately associated with practice in composition. As long as it is inculcated in the form of dry rules, it must go for nothing; for a rule in grammar, like a proverb, or a fact in history, is never remembered when it is most desirable that it should be brought into notice. We therefore recommend that every young person should be regularly trained in the principles and practice of literary construction before leaving school; at the same time, we are sorry to say, we do not know a single work suitable as a manual of instruction on the subject. It is vain to say, Behold the number of Grammars, one or

other of which is in the hands of almost every pupil—and also, Behold how much is done to teach composition to youth; for the answer is already given, Behold how few out of the thousands, or millions, of people in Great Britain, are able to write so much as a common letter with any thing like propriety. And this is a result which ought not to be. Reckoning man for man, Germany has ten authors—persons able to give their ideas to the world in print—for one in this country; a circumstance probably arising in a great measure from the more practically useful character of German tuition. There is no reason in the world, why all persons possessing an average understanding should not rival, at least approach, our ordinary writers. At the present moment there are individuals in every village in the kingdom, who, if they had been properly trained in the structure of our language—always presuming their minds were otherwise cultivated and expanded—might have displayed talents of the first order, and shone out with universal approbation. Yet, for lack of this kind of training, there they remain, fixed to some laborious pursuit, while their busily inventive intellect expands itself in silent contemplation, or perhaps in crotchets neither beneficial to themselves nor to others. How many minds are thus obscured and finally quenched! We have occasionally seen papers purporting to be on some department of moral or physical science, written by men of this stamp. But what writing! The whole a heap of confusion. Here and there brilliant ideas shining out from a chaos of verbiage, like gleams of glorious sunshine struggling through heavy masses of clouds.

PETER WILLIAMSON.

THE "Life and curious Adventures of Peter Williamson, who was carried off from Aberdeen, and sold for a Slave," were detailed to the world by the hero himself, and his little narrative was very popular some fifty years ago. It has now sunk nearly into oblivion, and we believe the following outline of Peter's history will be new, as we hope it will be entertaining, to most of our readers.

Peter Williamson was born in the parish of Aboyne, in Aberdeenshire, about the year 1726. He was sent in his childhood to Aberdeen to reside with an aunt, where he had not remained long before his misfortunes began. Some of the worthy traders of this northern capital followed at that period the gainful but execrable practice of kidnapping children, and conveying them to the plantations, as our North American colonies were then called, for sale. Peter, being a fine robust boy, was noticed while playing on the quay by some of the subordinate agents in this villainous traffic, and decoyed on board a ship in the harbour, in which were many children doomed to the same fate. These victims were kept below deck till the vessel sailed, as it did shortly after for the American coast. The ship crossed the Atlantic safely, but struck on a sand-bank on reaching the capes of Delaware, when the shrieking children were left on the wreck by the wretch of a captain and his men, who got off in boats. They returned, however, next day, and took off the little unfortunates, who were too valuable a cargo to be left behind. The whole party now remained on shore till picked up by a vessel bound for Philadelphia, where Peter and his kidnapped companions were sold for sixteen pounds a-head.

It is scarcely necessary to remark how different was the condition of the American settlements then from what it is now. At that period not one of the states was entirely *planted*, the native Indians still retaining locations in all of them, and keeping up incessant warfare with the whites. At first, Peter Williamson had no experience of this state of things, his master, or rather purchaser, being resident in Philadelphia. He was a humane man, and treated our hero kindly, bestowing on him a tolerable education. Peter's term of slavery was seven years, but he continued in his original service till the death of his master, who, having no children, left one hundred and fifty pounds sterling, his best horse, saddle, and all his wearing apparel, as a legacy to the Scottish boy. Peter was at this time seventeen years old, and for the next seven years he continued working diligently at various employments, until he had improved his capital considerably. He then thought it time to *settle*, and as a preliminary step got married. His father-in-law was a substantial planter, and bestowed upon the young pair a tract of well-cleared land on the inland frontiers of Pennsylvania. Peter's money stocked this farm, and his wife turning out a most agreeable partner, he lived for some time in his new settlement in great comfort. This unfortunately did not last long. In 1754, the British being then at enmity with the French, the Indians generally espoused the cause of the latter nation, which struggled with Britain for superiority in America. On the "fatal 2d of October 1754," as Peter calls it, as he was sitting up in his house, waiting for his wife's return from a short visit, the dismal war-cry of the savages sounded in his ears. This was followed by an attack on the dwelling, which contained Peter alone. Resistance was ineffectual; in a few minutes he was a prisoner; and being tied by the Indians to a tree in front of his house, had the grief of seeing it first plundered, and then burnt to the ground. All his grain, and all his cattle, were consumed in the buildings which held them. The savages then put a load on Peter's back, and threatened him with the worst of deaths, if he did not walk off quietly along with them.

Our unfortunate hero appears to have been spared, in order to assist in carrying plunder. But the savages made up for this leniency by torturing him. They tied him to trees, and took delight in applying burning sticks to his body, dancing all the while around him, and yelling fearfully. Had the captive not borne up manfully, so as to be useful under these and other miseries inflicted on him, he would not have been allowed to survive. Several dreadful proofs of this are related by Peter, who was witness to acts of horrible atrocity committed by the Indians on various families, whose members were

tortured and murdered, as much out of fiendish pleasure in such acts, as for their property. The country being thinly populated, no help could be procured in most cases till too late. Dragged up and down in these plundering excursions, Peter spent above two months miserably, almost entirely deprived of clothing, and half starved. It was only when his captors found it convenient to separate into small parties, that our hero saw before him a chance of escape. This he accomplished one night when his masters, a body of ten Indians, wearied with a severe day's hunting, slept soundly than usual around their fire on the grass. After five days' flight in the direction of the white settlements, he arrived, worn out with famine and toil, at the house of John Bell, an old friend. Here he was refreshed and clothed, and was able in a short time to proceed to his father-in-law's. Peter had the misfortune to find that his wife, though she had escaped the Indians, had died in his absence.

Our hero's account of the Indians accords with the descriptions which have been so plentifully showered on the world of late years—only, Peter never saw any of that wild generosity of character which novelists ascribe to the savages. To him they appeared in the light of ferocious and blood-thirsty plunderers; and no sooner was he somewhat recruited after his hardships, than he enlisted readily in the regiments raising against the French and their native allies, "to be revenged on the authors of his ruin." Boston was the head-quarters of this force, and thither the new recruit and his companions were sent. While here, Peter, being acquainted with Indian habits, was selected to form one of a party of one hundred men, sent on a special service against the natives, who had lately attacked the house of a Mr Long, killed him and the greatest part of his family, and carried off his son and daughter as prisoners. The pursuing party was headed by Captain Crawford, a gentleman to whom Miss Long was affianced; and Peter really rises into pathos in describing the scene that ensued on reaching the Indian plunderers. Miss Long was found tied to a tree in a miserable condition, and the meeting between the lovers made the tears of all to flow. "The captain, for a long time, could do nothing but gaze upon and clasp her to his bosom, crying, raving, and tearing his hair like one bereft of his senses." The Indians were killed to a man, and Peter tells us that his party felt extreme pleasure in scalping them—a piece of barbarity executed for the purpose of insuring, we suppose, a reward per head. Miss Long's brother had been put to death a short time before her rescue. Our hero and all the party were at the marriage, which took place some time after.

On the 1st of July 1755, the regiments set out from Boston for Oswego, a fort on the river Onondago, on the south side of Lake Ontario. This was considered at that time an important post, and fitted to be a central position in maintaining the war with the French, then masters of Lower Canada. Peter finds a great deal of fault, and gives good reasons for it, with General Shirley, and other officers in the management of this war. This subject we shall not enter into, but we may relate an adventure that occurred to Peter during a miserably ill-conducted expedition from Oswego to attack the French fort of Niagara. He was alone in a small boat, on the river Onondago. The boat stove on a rock, on which he was glad to fix himself, and where he spent a whole night lashed by the waters of the fall. He was got off in the morning, but being incautiously placed before a fire, his benumbed body swelled, and Peter's campaign terminated for the time. He had to be sent to the hospital at Albany, and subsequently he went to New York, where the rest of the soldiers followed him to winter quarters.

Peter briefly describes New York, which then contained nine thousand inhabitants, as a very fine city, which exceeded "in drinking and gallantry any city of America." Our hero did not stay long in it, having obtained a furlough in order to visit his old friends in Pennsylvania. This province, particularly on its frontiers, was still devastated by the natives, whom the settlers could neither curb by arms, nor appease by conciliation. Upwards of one thousand persons of this province had been murdered and scalped, we are told, within two years. Peter helped to train some militia to defend the district, and helped to scour the forests in quest of the savages, during his period of furlough. On returning to New York, he was ordered off, in the beginning of the year 1756, to Oswego, great preparations having been made for rendering this second campaign more effective than the last. How fruitless it was to our disgrace (says our hero), was soon known over all the world.

On his way to Oswego, Peter received a shot in the hand in a skirmish, which entirely disabled his third and fourth fingers, and it was not till the middle of July that he was able for duty at the fort. A singular circumstance took place shortly after his arrival. One Moglaaky, an Irishman, being placed as sentinel over a newly arrived cask of rum, was tempted to pierce the cask, and got intoxicated. He fell asleep, and in this condition was surprised by a prowling Indian, who made free with his scalp, which he carried off. The soldier's comrades found him afterwards, still asleep, and aroused him. He asked them what they wanted, and the men, astonished at his conduct, advised him to prepare for death, as his scalp was off. He thought at first they were joking, but was soon convinced of the truth. Strange to say, he survived it, and Peter may well say that no other instance of the kind was ever known!

Peter met with no private adventures worthy of note in this campaign, and on its termination, by capitulation of the British provincial forces, he was sent with others to Montreal. The French authorities here found the keeping of the captives burdensome, and put fifteen hundred of them on board a vessel for England. Peter was one of these, and arrived at Plymouth on the 6th of November 1766. Thus, within the short space of two years, had our hero passed from the condition of a comfortable farmer in Pennsylvania to that of a captive. His captivity had not lasted long, but the vicissitudes upon the whole, it must be allowed, were rapid and severe. Nor were his misfortunes ended on his reaching Britain. On receiving his discharge, he went to York, where, by the

assistance of some benevolent persons, he was enabled to print the little narrative of his sufferings. Having raised a small sum by this, he went, in June 1768, to Aberdeen. Here he was immediately charged with libelling the merchants of the city, by ascribing to them the practice of kidnapping; and the magistrates, being the very parties implicated in the charge, threw him into jail, burnt his book at the Market-Cross, and finally banished him from Aberdeen as a vagrant. Peter raised an action against these interested judges, in the Court of Session, and was successful. The magistrates were cast in £100 damages, with all the costs of the suit. This vouches very strongly for Peter's general veracity.

Peter Williamson, before this decision, had settled in Edinburgh, first in the capacity of tavern-keeper, and subsequently as bookseller, printer, and projector. It was in the first of these situations, we suppose, that he amused his visitors by assuming the dress, and illustrating the manners, of the Indians. He appears to have borne a good character in the Scottish capital, and to have shown an ingenious, though rather eccentric and speculative, turn of mind. He invented a machine for cutting grain, to supersede the use of the slow reaping-hook, which machine is said to be sometimes used till this day, under the name of the basket-scythe. He constructed, likewise, what he called Proverb, or Secret, Cards, "for discovering the thoughts of one's mind, in a curious and extraordinary manner." A more useful invention than this, was his portable press, which threw off two folio pages. Stamps, marking-ink, &c. were also objects on which he exercised his ingenuity. Perhaps the reader may conceive these projections of no great merit; the same cannot be said of another of his schemes. Peter planned and established the first, and long the sole, penny-post in Edinburgh, which he managed himself.

The places of business which Peter occupied seem to have been, first, a shop at the head of Forrester's Wynd, and, latterly, a shop in the Luckenbooths. We have as yet said nothing about his later doings as an author, for he allowed none of his talents to lie fallow. He published an Edinburgh Directory—an useful work, and one of the earliest of his class. In imitation of the Spectator, a periodical called the Scots Spy and Critical Observer was begun by him in 1776, and reached the extent of a volume of three hundred pages. He tried another production of the same kind in the following year, which was equally short-lived. Both of these publications, which contain much local information, are now exceedingly rare. At an earlier period, Peter had tried his hand as a political writer, having issued some "Considerations on Public Affairs."

Peter was not very fortunate in domestic life. In 1777, he married the daughter of a brother bookseller, Miss Jean Wilson, against whom he instituted a process of divorce, in 1789, in the course of which it came out, that, but for her misconduct, he might have been in easy circumstances, through his post-office emoluments chiefly. Peter died in 1799, having been supported in his latter years by a small government pension, which he had received on agreeing to surrender his penny-post to the general office.

ON GIVING ENTERTAINMENTS.

[The following quizzical, though, we believe, tolerably correct account of the mode of giving entertainments in London, appears in the pages of that useful publication, the *Magazine of Domestic Economy*, which we have at different times recommended to the notice of our readers.]

Nothing is worse understood, and worse practised, among the middle classes and inferior gentry in England, than the art of giving entertainments. Almost every married householder in this metropolis, who considers himself on the footing of a gentleman, and can command an income of from four to eight hundred a-year, fancies himself bound to give to his friends, in the course of the season, two or three evening parties—a kind of nondescript entertainment made up of shreds and patches of conversation, bad music, quadrilles and cards; the whole terminated by a supper, in which there is a tasteless and extravagant profusion of things not wanted—though for these things the guests are obliged to scramble, the supper-room being not large enough to hold half their number, and there being of knives, forks, glasses, and plates, scarcely sufficient for a third of the party. Moreover, there is not a chair to sit down upon; it being now the fashion at such entertainments to sup standing—a rather inconvenient posture, and an especially inelegant one for the ladies. I have never assisted at one of these parties without being reminded of the frog endeavouring to swell itself to the size of the ox; and the catastrophe of bursting has often struck me as analogous to the fate likely to attend many a host and hostess in this fair city.

The entertainments of the wealthy originate neither trouble nor inconvenience to the master and mistress of the family. There are hosts of servants to do all that is required, money to procure the most costly luxuries without the expense being felt, apartments vast enough to accommodate all the guests, and a profusion of those minor comforts, the absence of which is not only extremely vulgar, but often very distressing. The entertainments of the less affluent classes are very different from this. The whole family, for nearly a week previous, are wearied almost to death with the preparations for the feast. Many are turned out of their sleeping apartments, beds are removed, and those rooms, consecrated to innocence and repose, desecrated perhaps with card-tables, and their attendant pastimes. As the lady of the house would fain vie with the most wealthy in the variety and excellence of her "meats," and as the pastry-cook is very expensive, much has to be done at home. During several days, therefore, the process of cookery is going on,

and, pending this interval, the whole family have to undergo much vexation and disappointment, not unmixed with bickering. In the house there is no convenience for many of the more refined culinary preparations; consequently shifts are to be made, and many failures occur which add considerably to the expense.

The auspicious day at length dawns, and every heart, from the maid-servant and footman (if there is one) to the mistress of the mansion, throbs with expectation, not of delight, nor of pleasing anticipation, but proceeding from a mingled sensation of dread that things may go wrong, and hope that they may not. The bustle of the day having once begun, the lady of the house strives, and worries herself, and fumes and rages, and muddles about, until the guests arrive. She is then so tired, that she can scarcely receive them. With a flushed face, a pained and wearied body, she is forced to undergo a torture which, if inflicted as a punishment, would be considered dreadful. She is compelled to exertion for the entertainment of persons about whom she cares nothing; to wear smiles when she could willingly weep; and to listen to each silly coxcomb who addresses her, whilst her thoughts are wandering towards the kitchen, where she is in constant dread of some accident taking place, that may sadly derange her gastronomic plans. The guests gradually arrive, the drawing-rooms are filled to suffocation;—space is, however, made for a quadrille, and the hostess moves through the room from one guest to another, escaping every now and then to see that matters are right below. In one of the bedrooms are many of the papas and mamas of the young folks, playing their quiet rubber. Hither also the polite hostess is obliged to come at intervals, and make a show of cordial hospitality, though from excessive fatigue she can scarcely stand or speak. The supper arrives; the guests crowd successively into a small dining-room, where the table is covered with a great and expensive profusion, but where every one is put to much trouble and inconvenience, for want of actual necessities, not to say comforts. Many a dress is spoiled, many a careful toilet disturbed, by the awkwardness of the gentlemen who wait upon the ladies, as much as from the want of proper space. After each lady has made her entrance and her exit, a few choice spirits remain behind, to the great annoyance of the lady of the house. Amid broiled plates and fragments of fowl, and jelly, and trifle mixed together, they drink to the host and hostess, until they have flushed faces and excited brains. In this unseemly state they ascend to the drawing-room, and appear constantly on the verge of committing some woeful solecism in good breeding. At length the company depart, but there is still no repose for the lady, who has suffered so much for their entertainment. She has now to collect all the fragments of the supper that are worth preserving, and put them safe under lock and key.

Next day she is confined to her bed, and scarcely able to do any thing for several days in succession. Meanwhile, the family live upon fragments, until the children are sick of stale custards and cold drumsticks of fowls. When the remnants of the feast are gone, the family are pinched for a month to come, the means for their more comfortable support having been anticipated in giving an entertainment that caused much inconvenience to the family, and afforded very little pleasure to the guests.

Such, however, is a true picture of a large proportion of the evening parties given in London by the middle classes of society; and we would ask whether the whole system of these entertainments is not only very injudicious, but exceedingly vulgar: for it is always vulgar to attempt giving that which you have not the means of giving well, and on these occasions you are criticised the most severely by your own guests. Entertainments may be got up by persons of small means with quite as much elegance as those of the very highest classes, and at an expense within the limits of a small income. At such parties people of refined breeding would find pleasure, though there was an absence of expensive luxuries, whilst they would feel disgust at parties such as I have just described, and which, in London, are certainly more common than any other kind.

Dinner parties, too, are subject to the same observations. How often have I seen the hostess disappear before dinner is announced, and return to the drawing-room only just prior to such announcement, wearing on her flushed countenance marks of the kitchen fire, blended with anxiety, and her nice silk dress bearing sundry minute spots of grease in front! At table, too, the awkward servant is constantly making some mistake; either the head of the cod's head and shoulders is put the wrong way, or some of the dishes are placed where others ought to be. The mistress is forced to direct the servant in an under tone. The most distinguished of the guests, the one favoured with the seat of honour next the lady, considers himself, at least, bound to make himself as agreeable as he can; but, whilst he is striving to entertain the lady, he can perceive, that, though her head is politely turned towards him, as if in the act of listening, and that a smile plays upon her mouth, she hears not a word he utters, her whole attention being divided between the dinner-table and the servant, and, perhaps, her husband, whom she sees fidgeting upon his chair, and vainly attempting to conceal his discontent at the servant's mistakes, and, perhaps, those of the cook, or probably, at some trifling act of negligence on the

part of his wife. Like her, he wears a smile upon his lips, but not on his brow. His manner, though polite, is evidently constrained; and thus a damper is thrown upon the conviviality of the whole party. The conversation flags, and the evident constraint of the host and hostess is communicated to the guests, who eat their dinner in discomfort, and depart dissatisfied.

"Why do people give dinners," they say, "if their guests are to be received with constraint and inconvenience? If dinner parties must be given, let there be servants who understand their duties: it is preposterous to hear the mistress of the house at the head of the table directing a stupid servant maid, or a stupid servant man, who acts in a dozen capacities in the house, how each dish is to be placed; and it is still more preposterous for restraint and ill-humour to be cast over a convivial party, on account of such trifling matters as turning a cod's head the wrong way, or placing the curry opposite to the stewed kidneys, instead of opposite to the rice."

It is ostentation, not hospitality, that induces people to give entertainments beyond their means; and the feeling by which these persons are actuated, is one of self-love, not of delight at receiving their friends. The truth is, that the mistress of a family derives no pleasure from these parties, but much pain and inconvenience. She abhors the thing so far as her personal comfort is concerned—but her vanity is ministered to, her self-love is gratified, and to an ostentatious display of plate and glass and finery she would sacrifice all besides. Is this the sentiment that ought to exist?—or, if it does, and the evil of such entertainments cannot be avoided, ought it to be apparent to the guests?—ought hospitality to be converted, from a smiling and beautiful maiden, into an old, withered, ill-tempered crone?

Taking entertainments, with the spirit in which they now originate, and admitting, for the sake of the present argument, that this cannot be remedied, we must be allowed to observe, that almost the whole of the uneasiness arising from them, both to the hosts and to the guests, proceeds from the mania of straining at too much, of putting upon the table things for which there are not in the house the necessary conveniences, and of having pretensions to a display of order and symmetry, as well as good cheer, which can be realised only by servants accustomed to the same thing every day, instead of twice or thrice a-year. Pretensions above your means are always an evidence of ill-breeding, and nothing can be more truly vulgar than dinner parties such as I have described. It is ten thousand times more elegant, and assuredly a better specimen of refined manners, to give to your guests the best that your means afford, but not to give your servants to do that to which they are not accustomed. The mistress of the house, if she would avoid the imputation of vulgarity, should be as easy and unconstrained in the midst of her guests, as if she neither knew nor cared how things were done. Her active duties lie behind the scenes, not in the presence of her guests; and her making them witnesses of her domestic drillings, and domestic fault-findings, shows a want of respect for herself as well as for them.

WORDSWORTH AND HIS POETRY.

AMONG the poets of the passing or immediately past age, a high place has already been assigned—probably a higher will be assigned by posterity—to William Wordsworth. Judging that many who weekly peruse the present work must know little about this eminent person, we shall present a short account of him and of his poetry.

He was born at Cockermouth in the year 1770, and must consequently be about sixty-eight years of age. He received an excellent education, completed at St John's College, Cambridge; and at an early period of life, abandoning all ambitious prospects, retired to a beautiful spot amidst the English lakes, in order to cultivate his poetical talents. Mr Wordsworth has there lived for upwards of forty years, strenuously keeping at a distance the bustling passions of the world, and content, in his own beautiful language,

To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.

Two small volumes, published in 1793, containing poems entitled "the Evening Walk," and "Descriptive Sketches," were the first fruits of his genius; they remind the reader of the poetry of Goldsmith, though with a peculiar vein of feeling, which is wanting in the author of the *Deserted Village*.

In a volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, which appeared in 1798, Mr Wordsworth for the first time brought before the world that new theory of poetry which has since been the subject of so much critical disputation; and of this theory the *Lyrical Ballads* were designed to serve as examples. The chief features of the theory were—a choice of incidents and situations from ordinary life—to describe them in ordinary colloquial language; at the same time to invest them with a certain colouring of the imagination, whereby they should be presented to the mind in an unusual way, and, further, to render them additionally interesting, by tracing in them the

primary laws of our nature. Many of the ballads composed in this manner succeeded in their aim, and upon the whole the publication was a popular one. But, amidst better pieces, there were several in which the subjects were of so mean and unpoetical a kind; and the language so bald and childish, that a strong opposition was raised against Mr Wordsworth's pretensions as a poet, and he became, and continued for twenty years to be, the object of fully as much ridicule as admiration. In 1807, he published two volumes of poems, in which the same principles of poetical composition were exemplified, and with nearly the same results. The admirers of Mr Wordsworth were now, however, numerous; several young men of poetical talent, untrammelled by prepossessions, adopted his theory, and gave their own exemplifications of it. The most remarkable of these was Mr John Wilson, who has since attained a very eminent place in literature. Mr Wordsworth was now said to have founded a school of poetry, and to this fraternity the name of the *Lake School* was given, with a reference to Mr Wordsworth's residence—a beautifully situated cottage at Rydal Mount, in the county of Westmoreland. In 1814, under the title of the *Excursion*, he published a portion of a large poem entitled the *Recluse*, which had been the work of many laborious years, but which he has never been induced to give entire to the public. The *Excursion* is itself one of the noblest philosophical poems in our language; containing views at once comprehensive and simple, of man, nature, and society, and combining the finest sensibilities with the richest fancy. Several short narrative pieces, and a collection of Sonnets, form the chief remaining publications of Wordsworth.

The long and scornful probation which Wordsworth has endured as a poet, is by no means wonderful. The predominating character of his mind has from the first been purely meditative. He contemplated the simple objects of nature, and conversed with the simple people of the country, till his mind saw that in them which others were too busy, or too careless, to see, a fine harmony with the great laws of being and of the universe, and till he felt, what others have no time to feel, even if they had the power, that the humblest things are bound to the greatest by an all-pervading chain of sympathy. Now, it was to have been expected that poetry so purely meditative, so exempt from the workings of passion, so repudiative of all that the world considers glorious and splendid, should not at first find a ready access to the hearts of a people who, as a whole, are so actively employed in the pursuit of gain and grandeur, and so deeply and thrillingly engaged in the great struggles of opinion. But Wordsworth has waited patiently in his rural solitude, till the heart of England has been in some measure converted to his poetical religion. Nor has this period of expectancy been passed unhappily. In the language of a fugitive critic, "He has had bountifully showered upon him, even from his youth upwards, all the influences most propitious at once to happiness, to poetry, and to philosophy. The things which he has himself prescribed as the healthiest nurture of the aspiring intellect, and that upon which alone it can grow up to the fulness of wisdom and power—

Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk
Man holds with week-day man, in the hourly walk
Of the mind's business;—

all these have been his, in a measure in which they have been enjoyed only by the fortunate few. Although for some part of this happy lot Wordsworth may have been indebted to fortune, he owes much more of it—he owes all that has preserved its happiness—to himself. With a wise and rare moderation, he has rested content with it, and sought nothing beyond. He has not forsaken the substance of happiness to pursue the shadow. Finding under a humble roof among his native hills, all that a poet really wanted, he has refused to exchange the retirement of his rural cottage, and the simplicity of that quiet life, for aught elsewhere that might have lured a more vulgar ambition. Poetry has, indeed, been to him, as he somewhere says, "its own exceeding great reward;" but it has been thus, because he has been, almost beyond any other poet that ever lived, faithful to poetry. He has taken her for the companion of his life, and admitted no other partner to share his bosom with her. Thus doth love, perfect and single, ever create its own heaven."

One of the most captivating peculiarities of Wordsworth's poetry, is the diction employed in it. We pass over the childish ballads about idiot boys and Goody Blakes, and take his *Excursion*, his *Laodamia*, and his *Sonnets*, as the true characteristic emanations of his genius. In these we find no overstrained or bold simplicity, but a manly and thoughtful spirit pouring forth a luxuriance of pure and nervous English, with an ease and freedom that even Dryden does not surpass. Indeed, in the distinct and perfect expression of minute shades of thought or feeling, Wordsworth has no equal. Who that retains any memory of his childhood does not recollect the action alluded to in the following lines, and what other poet could have

so well given utterance to the indefinite and mystical feelings excited by it?

I have seen

A curious child applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell,
To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
Listened intensely; and his countenance soon
Brightened with joy; for murmuring from within
Were heard, sonorous cadences! whereby,
To his belief, the monitor expressed
Mysterious union with its native sea.

In fine perception of the beauties of nature, Wordsworth is second to no poet of present or past times. From the daisy and the daffodil, to the tall mountain pine and the wide-armed oak, from the robin and the wren, to the sun-daring eagle, from the brook and the tarn, to "the old sea," through all scenes and objects, animate or inanimate, his eye ranges with delight; and with a "soul of power" he deduces from all, lessons meet for humanity. The humblest things in nature are those he loves the most; and with the like spirit he views his fellow-men, choosing as his favourite theme the virtues of the poor and the lowly, and painting with an affectionate hand the warmth of heart and simple loves that hallow the peasant's hearth. He has tenderness and pathos at command; and though few passages in his poems can be termed sublime, an elevation of thought and style pervades his larger and more ambitious pieces, that often approaches closely to sublimity. He is vivid in description, though seldom lively in tone of thought. Yet he is disposed to think well of human nature generally, and it is only from the high didactic aim which he has always in view, that his effusions are so deeply imbued with seriousness.

We have on different occasions presented short specimens of Wordsworth's poetry, and to these we now add the following pieces:—

SONNET TO —, IN HER SEVENTEENTH YEAR.

Such age how beautiful! O Lady bright,
Whose mortal lineaments seem all refined
By favouring Nature and a saintly Mind
To something purer and more exquisite
Than flesh and blood; when'er thou meet'st my sight,
When I behold thy blanched unwithered cheek,
Thy temples fringed with locks of gleaming white,
And head that droops because the soul is meek,
Thence with the welcome snowdrop I compare;
That child of winter, prompting thoughts that climb
From desolation toward the genial prime;
Or with the Moon conquering earth's misty air,
And filling more and more with crystal light
As pensive Evening deepens into night.

THE PRIMROSE OF THE ROCK.

A rock there is whose lonely front
The passing traveller slight;
Yet there the glow-worm hangs their lamps,
Like stars, at various heights;
And one eye primrose to that rock
The vernal breeze invites.
What hideous warfare hath been waged,
What kingdoms overthrown,
Since first I spied that primrose-tuft
And marked it for my own;
A lasting link in nature's chain
From highest heaven let down!
The flowers, still faithful to the stems,
Their fellowship renew;
The stems are faithful to the root,
That worketh out of view;
And to the rock the root adheres
In every fibre true.
Close clings to earth the living rock,
Though threatening still to fall;
The earth is constant to her sphere;
And God upholds them all:
So blooms this lonely plant, nor dreads
Her annual funeral.

Here comes the meditative strain;
But air breathed soft that day,
The hoary mountain-heights were cheered,
The sunny vale looked gay;
And to the Primrose of the Rock
I gave this after-lay.

I sang—Let myriads of bright flowers,
Like thee, in field and grove
Revive unweary;—mightier far,
Than tremblings that reprove
Our vernal tendencies to hope,
Is God's redeeming love;
That love which changed—for woe disease,
For sorrow that had bent
O'er hopeless dust, for withered age—
Their moral element,
And turned the thistles of a curse
To types beneficent.

Sin-blighted though we are, we too,
The reasoning sons of men,
From one oblivious winter called
Shall rise, and breathe again;
And in eternal summer lose
Our threescore years and ten.

To humbleness of heart descends
This presence from on high,
The faith that elevates the just,
Before and when they die;
And makes each soul a separate heaven,
A court for Deity.

TALE OF ELLEN.

As on a sunny bank, a tender lamb
Lurks in safe shelter from the winds of March,
Screened by its parent, so that little mound
Lies guarded by its neighbour; the small heap
Speaks for itself: an infant there doth rest;
The sheltering hillock is the Mother's grave.
If mild discourse, and manners that conformed
A natural dignity on humblest rank;
If gladsome spirits, and benignant looks,
That for a face not beautiful did more
Than beauty for the fairest face can do;

And if religious tenderness of heart,
Grieving for sin, and penitential tears
Shed when the clouds had gathered and distained
The spotless ether of a maiden life;
If these may make a hallowed spot of earth
More holy in the sight of God or Man;
Then, over that mould, a sanctity shall brood
Till the stars sicken at the day of doom.

Ah! what a warning for a thoughtless man,
Could field or grove, could any spot of earth,
Show to his eye an image of the puny
Which it hath witnessed; render back an echo
Of the sad steps by which it hath been trod!
There, by her innocent baby's precious grave,
Yea, doubtless, on the turf that rooks her own,
The Mother oft was seen to stand, or kneel
In the broad day, a weeping Magdalene.
Now she is not; the swelling turf reports
Of the fresh shower, but of poor Ellen's tears
Is silent.

[The poet describes the forsaken cottage-girl thus introduced to notice.]

'Twill please you to be told
That, studiously withdrawing from the eye
Of all companionship, the sufferer yet
In lonely reading found a meeker resource:
How thankful for the warmth of summer days,
When she could slip into the cottage-barn,
And find a secret oratory there;
Or, in the garden, under friendly veil
Of their long twilight, pore upon her book
By the last lingering help of open sky,
Till the dark night dismissed her to her bed!
Thus did a waking fancy sometimes lose
The unconquerable pang of despised love.

A kinder passion opened on her soul
When that poor Child was born. Upon its face
She looked as on a pure and spotless gift
Of unexpected promise, where a grief
Or dread was all that had been thought of.—Joy
Far livelier than bewildered traveller feels,
Amid a perilous waste that all night long
Hath harassed him toiling through fearful storm,
When he beholds the first pale speck serene
Of day-spring, in the gloomy east, revealed,
And greets it with thanksgiving. 'Till this hour,
Thus, in her Mother's hearing Ellen spoke,
'There was a story region in my heart;
But he, at whose command the parched rock
Was smitten, and poured forth a quenching stream,
Hath softened that obscurity, and made
Unlooked-for gladness in the desert place,
To save the perishing; and, henceforth, I look
Upon the light with cheerfulness, for thee
My infant! and for that good Mother dear,
Who bore me; and hath prayed for me in vain!—
Yet not in vain; it shall not be in vain.'

Through four months' space the Infant drew its food
From the maternal breast; then scruples rose;
Thoughts, which the rich are free from, came and crossed
The fond affection. She no more could bear
By her offence to lay a twofold weight
On a kind parent willing to forget
Their slender means; so, to that parent's care
Trusting her child, she left their common home,
And with contented spirit undertook
A Foster-mother's office.

The pair, whose infant she was bound to nurse,
Forbade her all communion with her own:
Week after week, the mandate they enforced.
—So near! yet not allowed, upon that sight
To fix her eye—alas! 'twas hard to bear!
But worse affliction must be borne—far worse,
'Tis the Heaven's will—that, after a disease
Began and ended within three days' space,
Her child should die; as Ellen now exclaimed
Her own—deserted child!—Once, only once,
She saw it in that mortal malady;
And, on the burial-day, could scarcely gain
Permission to attend its obsequies.
She reached the house, late of the funeral train;
And some one, as she entered, having chanced
To urge unthinkingly their prompt departure,
'Nay,' said she, with commanding look, a spirit
Of anger never seen in her before,
'Nay, ye must wait my time!' and down she sat,
And by the unclenched coffin kept her seat
Weeping and looking, looking on and weeping,
Upon the last sweet slumber of her Child,
Until at length her soul was satisfied.

You see the Infant's Grave; and to this spot,
The Mother, oft as she was sent abroad,
On whatsoever errand, urged her steps:
Hither she came; here stood, and sometimes knelt
In the broad day, a rueful Magdalene!

In vain I pleaded—
But the green stalk of Ellen's life was snapped,
And the flower drooped; as every eye could see,
It hung its head in mortal languishment.
—Added by this appearance, I at length
Prevailed; and, from those bonds released, she went
Home to her mother's house.

She had built,
Her fond maternal heart had built, a nest
In blindness all too near the river's edge;
That work a summer flood with hasty swell
Had swept away; and now her spirit longed
For its last flight to heaven's security.
—The bodily form was wasted day by day;
Meanwhile, relinquishing all other cares,
Her mind she strictly tutored to find peace
And pleasure in endurance. Much she thought,
And much she read; and brooded feelingly
Upon her own unworthiness. To me,
As to a spiritual comforter and friend,
Her heart she opened; and no pains were spared
To mitigate, so gently as I could,
The sting of self-reproach, with healing words.
Mock Haint! through patience glorified on earth!
In whose, as by her lonely hearth she sat,
The ghostly face of cold decay put on
A sun-like beauty, and appeared divine!
May I not mention—that, within those walls,
In due observance of her pious wish,
The congregation joined with me in prayer
For her soul's good? Nor was that vain.
—Much did she suffer; but, if any friend,
Beholding her condition, at the sight
Gave way to words of pity or complaint,

She stifled them with a prompt reproof, and said
'He who afflicts me knows what I can bear;
And, when I fall, and can endure no more,
Will mercifully take me to himself.'
So, through the cloud of death, her spirit passed
Into that pure and unknown world of love
Where injury cannot come—and here is laid
The mortal body by her Infant's side.

TRIPLES TO SMILE AT.

Minute descriptions of the external appearance of noted men are much desired by the world; but we question if in any country, except one, it could have occurred that the weight of great men was a point of importance. In the Salem Gazette of August 19, 1783, the weights of the principal American revolutionary commanders were given. "as weighed in the scales at West Point;" the following is the list as there published:—General Washington, 339 lbs.; General Lincoln, 234; General Knox, 300; General Huntington, 132; General Groaton, 166; Colonel Swift, 219; Colonel Michael Jackson, 223; Colonel Henry Jackson, 230; Lieutenant-Colonel Huntington, 232; Lieutenant-Colonel Cobb, 162; Lieutenant-Colonel Humphreys, 221. The average, 214 lbs., may be considered high.

At Kubbepore na Jeal, in India, there is a cannon two hundred and thirteen inches long, sixty-six inches round the muzzle, and eighteen inches round the calibre. It has five, and had originally six equidistant ribs, by which it was lifted up. This gun is called by the natives Jaun Kubbah, or the destroyer of life, and its casting and position are attributed to the deities or divinities, though its almost obliterated Persian inscriptions declare its formation by human means. But what is most extraordinary about it is, that two peepul trees have grown both cannon and carriage into themselves. Fragments of the iron, a spring, one of the linches, and part of the woodwork, protrude from between the roots and bodies of these trees, but the trees alone entirely support the gun, one of the rings of which, and half of its whole length, are completely hid between and inside their bark and trunks. A more curious sight, or a cannon more firmly fixed, though by the mere gradual growth of two trees, cannot well be imagined. The Indians assert that it was only once fired, and sent the ball twenty-four miles!—*Asiatic Journal*.

A traveller once showed Lavater (the physiognomist) two portraits; the one of an highwayman who had been broken upon the wheel, the other was the portrait of Kant, the philosopher: he was desired to distinguish between them. Lavater took up that of the highwayman; after attentively considering it for some time, "here," said he, "we have the true philosopher; here is penetration in the eye, and reflection in the forehead; here is cause, and there is effect; here is combination, there is distinction; synthetic lips! and analytic nose." Then turning to the portrait of the philosopher, he exclaimed, "The calm thinking villain is so well expressed, and so strongly marked in his countenance, that it needs no comment." This anecdote Kant used to tell with great glee.

The province of Alt, in Lower Seneca, is considered as an independent province, and it pays no tribute. They have a great dislike to *ladies, talis, and attorneys*, alleging that they only increase disputes between man and man, which is not at all necessary; all disputes are therefore decided by the sheik, who is not a logical wrangler, but decides according to the simplest manner. The following decree of their sheik is on record:—"Four men who, for elucidation, we will call A, B, C, and D, conjointly bought a mule; each claimed a leg. D's leg was the off-hand one. In a few days this leg began to swell: it was agreed to cure it by burning it with a hot iron, which is a common remedy in this country. This done, the mule was turned out and went into a field of barley. Some spark was attached to the hoof, and set fire to the corn, which was consumed. The proprietors of the barley applied to the sheik for justice; and A, B, C, and D, the owners of the mule, were summoned to appear. The sheik, finding the leg which caused the barley to be burned belonged to D, ordered him to pay the value of the barley. D expostulated, and maintained that he had no right to pay; for, if it had not been for A, B, and C, and a portion of the mule, the barley would have run with a hot iron, which is a common remedy in this country. This done, the mule was turned out and went into a field of barley. Some spark was attached to the hoof, and set fire to the corn, which was consumed. The proprietors of the barley applied to the sheik for justice; and A, B, C, and D, the owners of the mule, were summoned to appear. The sheik, finding the leg which caused the barley to be burned belonged to D, ordered him to pay the value of the barley. D expostulated, and maintained that he had no right to pay; for, if it had not been for A, B, and C, and a portion of the mule, the barley would have run with a hot iron, which is a common remedy in this country. 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